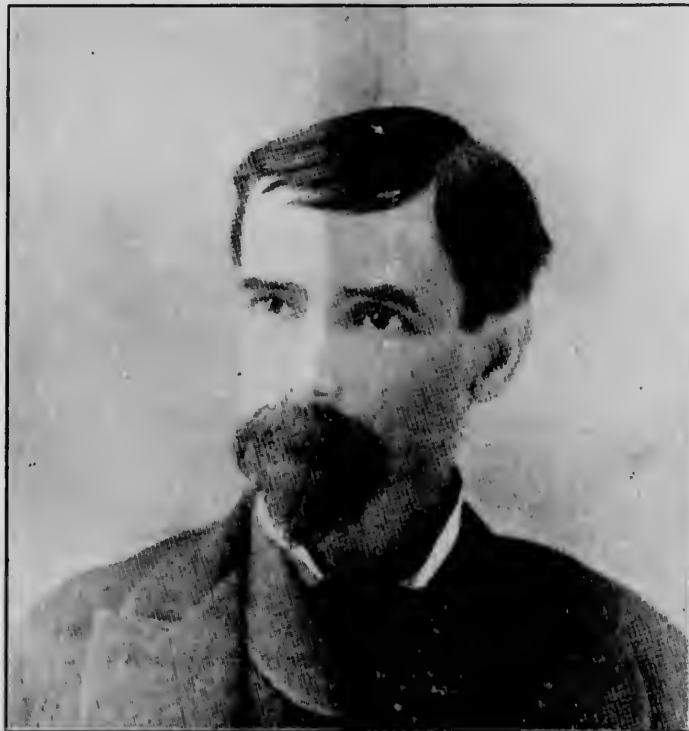


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DEVOTED TO THE PROPAGANDA OF FREEDOM OF THOUGHT



DR. J. F. P. WETZEL.

Western Instructor and a Prominent Freethinker.

Dr. J. F. P. WETZEL

Throughout the years of its active propaganda Free-thought has always insisted upon and given encouragement to study and investigation in order to know and understand. No better illustration of the results to be obtained thereby upon the individual mind can be found than what is afforded in the career and work of the subject of this brief sketch.

Our readers will recall the splendid article published a few weeks ago upon morals, health and the State. Some favorable comments have been received upon the publication of that article. In this short account we now undertake to give, in outline, the life of its author.

Dr. J. F. P. Wetzel was born at Weston, Lewis county, Virginia, in 1853, now a part of West Virginia, and was named after President Pierce. The Wetzel family had acquired a distinctive prominence in that section from the early settlement of the valley of the Ohio River. Lewis Wetzel was well and widely known as a noted Indian scout, while Wetzel's Cave bears the family name. While still a young man, Mr. Wetzel took a scientific course in the University of his native State, and afterwards taught school, passing through every department from teacher in the primary grade to that of principal. Later, he took a course of instruction in the Kentucky School of Medicine, in the Louisville Medical College, from which he graduated with honor, and began the practice of his profession. He was married to Elizabeth J. Fishback, the eldest daughter of a near and dear neighbor, from which union there have been born eight children.

Imbued with a progressive mind, Dr. Wetzel and his family moved to Kansas, where he practiced medicine for a time, and later, moved further westward, where he became a member of the faculty in different medical schools and colleges. Among these may be mentioned The Willamette Medical School, at Portland, Oregon; The Post-Graduate Medical Department of the University of California, and the Pacific Coast Regular College of Medicine. In the latter he filled two chairs, namely, Professor of Physiology and Lecturer on Electro-Therapeutics and Electro-Surgery.

His wide research into natural science and all its correlatives led him directly to Free-thought, and as a result, he is extremely liberal on all subjects. For many years he has identified himself with the Liberal movement, and has written extensively on liberal and scientific lines. When Lucifer, published by Moses Harmon, was first brought to light at Valley Falls, Kansas, a quarter of a century

ago, Dr. Wetzel wrote for that paper. He was also a firm and fast friend of the late Dr. J. L. York, the noted Free-thought lecturer, who held forth for years in San Francisco. In order to keep the Liberal movement alive, after his advent to San Francisco, Dr. Wetzel started Free-thought societies, organized Paine memorials, but shortly after the earthquake in 1906, Dr. York died, and Dr. Wetzel, with a number of younger and willing hands and hearts, went to work and revived the propaganda. Dr. Wetzel's voice is still heard with no uncertain sound, as his lecture before the Materialist Association will attest, which has appeared in the Blade, in part. He is a coherent, logical, and convincing reasoner and speaker. He bases his arguments upon facts and never allows his imagination to lure him into unknown depths.

Like the late Robert G. Ingersoll, our subject came from a line of orthodox preachers, and again like Ingersoll, he began to investigate at an early age. Emerging from the shrysalis of infantile thought, Dr. Wetzel passed out of his shell of superstition into the light of truth and Free-thought.

In politics, Dr. Wetzel was always a Democrat. He gave up party affiliations years ago and undertook a propaganda in behalf of what was known as the Interest Tax Movement, which he had formulated, believing it to be a feasible plan for the same conducting of public affairs. He did not endorse the Single Tax theories of the late Henry George, urging that his plan was more comprehensive, more scientific and more in line with the evolution of political and economic changes.

Although the Doctor's duties, professionally, are very exacting, he still finds time wherein to lift his voice and use his pen for freedom of thought and conscience. He cordially dislikes sophistry. Subjecting every ism, every fad, to the supreme test of human reason, he never identified himself with any form of religious or political superstition, but is willing to investigate every worthy subject brought to his notice. Only in this way can truth be made manifest. If to refuse to reason is to be a bigot, there can be no bigotry in the nature, the mind, or make-up of Dr. Wetzel, and our cause would prosper at a more rapid rate did we have more of such advocates willing and capable of speaking in its behalf.

It is gratifying to know that Dr. Wetzel has promised to complete his article on Health, Morals and the State, other parts of which will appear in the Blade in due time.

U. M. W. 1

MAN'S ORIGIN AND DESTINY

NO LOSS BY ABOLISHING THE CHURCH.—IT GIVES
SOCIETY NO VALUE FOR WHAT IT RECEIVES.—
NATIONS GOVERNED BY BIOLOGICAL LAWS.

(By Dr. A. Hausman.)

The very costly institution of law is the penalty for low individual egoism, the violation of the social laws by practicing dishonesty (the desire of obtaining the fruit of the labor of others without giving an equivalent) or crime, the gratification of desires without regard to the welfare of others. The enormous fees lawyers receive for their work mean so much loss for those who have to pay; they receive no equivalent for their money. The written law is no absolute necessity; there are thousands living who do not require any law whatever; but since the prevalence of a low egoism in a certain number of people must be admitted, the law cannot entirely be dispensed with, although it could be much simplified and made more effective. Why does a lawyer receive ten or a hundred dollars when others receive only one for their labor in the same time? Is his work of higher value, of greater importance for society? Certainly not. All the questions at issue in the courts can be decided more in accordance with justice without the aid of the statutes, if only the simple laws of society and a little logic were applied. As it is now, the final decision, rendered by a jury, depends after all on the opinion of untrained minds, and all the vast amount of legal wisdom displayed in the pleadings is utterly wasted.

While these two social institutions, the army and the government, cannot be abolished entirely, but only reduced and modified, there is no reason why the church should continue to exist. The buildings dedicated to the worship of a demented human mind, called god, and the maintenance of the persons conducting the so-called divine service, represent an enormous loss of labor, corresponding to the amount of money expended, for which society receives no value in return. The preaching of the gospel has no effect whatever on the morals of the people, except to make them conceited, moral cowards and hypocrites. The church does not alleviate misery, and whatever charitable institutions are supported by the church represent but a small fraction, devoted to a useful purpose, of the immense sums contributed by the people. But why expend ten dollars in order to receive one back by useful appropriation? Why not devote the whole to the improvement of the physical and moral condition of the destitute people?

We shall proceed now to examine the useful occupations which may be divided into two classes—those producing

the absolute necessities of life, and those devoted to the satisfaction of relative necessities, or luxuries.

To the first class pertain all those avocations having for an object the production of the material used for clothing, shelter and food, and those who effect the distribution of these articles. Under this group are comprised farmers, artisans, mechanics, merchants, in short, all industries engaged in the production of the necessities of life; further, all the means of communication, railroads, telegraphs, postal service and navigation; also, the scientific professions, teachers, physicians, etc. To the second class belong all those industries and professions which do not contribute to the material support of life—the manufactory of intoxicating drinks, tobacco, etc., all the fine arts, painting, sculpturing, acting, music, novel writing and many others.

It must be left to the reader to classify the manifold occupations of our complicated labor system, but in attempting to do so, he will discover the absolute impossibility of drawing the line between necessity and luxury. Considering that our most refined culture is the result of evolution from a state of barbarism, and that civilization is merely a modification of the natural instincts which we have in common with a certain group of animals, it is evident that a consequent subtraction from life of all which is not absolutely necessary for existence, would bring humanity back to the primitive state of the savage. Between the two extremities, the half naked savage and the rich man, whose palace is adorned with the costly works of art, lies the limit between necessity and luxury. But since civilization implies more wants than the mere existence of the savage, the line moves more and more away from the primitive state of life towards the other extremity with the progress of culture. Though we cannot draw a sharp line, we can feel ourselves what we require for our happiness and what for us constitutes a necessity. This is, however, a very elastic and extensible conception, whose lower limit is given by the smallest amount of food, clothing and shelter required to keep a person in a condition to fully exert his physical and mental abilities, whose upper confines are only limited by the amount of money a person has at his disposition above the necessities of life. Every one must decide for himself, according to his means, what is a luxury for him.

IMPOSSIBILITY TO BALANCE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION.

Taking into account the indefiniteness of the term lux-

ury, the instability of the population, which changes constantly, and the unreliability of commercial relations between the nations, it becomes obvious that an exact equalization or balance of production and consumption is an utter impossibility. In the first place, the production of the absolute necessities of life by agriculture is subject to influence beyond human control, and on the produce of the soil again depends the consumption of luxury. It is a common error of socialistic writers not to take into account the important fact that luxury represents no well-defined term, but that necessity does, as far as possible under the changeable relations between money and material value. Industries dependent on the consumption of luxuries will be affected first by any political or social disturbance, and there is no power in the world that could avert such depressions and keep up a balance between consumption and production. If we investigate which occupations pay the best, we find that the greatest wealth is in the hands of merchants, manufacturers and persons controlling public institutions, railroads, navigation, etc. The reasons why such occupations pay better than technical or scientific professions, healing the sick or teaching the rising generation, will be found not in a moral or ethic, but in a physical law, a simple arithmetical proposition. A professional person is paid for his personal services, which are of course limited by physical capacity and time. An artisan may employ help, but there will rarely be an opportunity for making a fortune, as may be done by speculation. A manufacturer may employ a large number of laborers, and his profits increase with his production. Taking the breweries, for instance; the enormous consumption of small quantities of beer gives some of them a princely income. A merchant makes a certain profit on a certain quantity of goods, which is the remuneration, or wages, for his labor, selecting and distributing that amount of goods. Since this amount is not limited by physical capacity, it may be augmented greatly, and the profit, or wages, will increase in proportion. It is the same with all occupations which are not dependent on personal capacity, but on mechanical appliances.

Reducing the social condition of nations to the last consequences, the common biological laws, we find that such institutions will give certain members of the community who contribute absolutely nothing to its support, a larger portion of material value produced by labor, and so relies of a barbarous state of mankind and can only exist because the majority of the people are still ignorant of the biological laws as the ultimate cause. The larger the proportion of ignorant people the greater will be the number of useless members of society, the greater will be the contrast between the lower and the higher classes, the poor and the rich. The more the people learn to discredit the false teachings of religion and to understand the laws of nature, the better they will be enabled to guard their own welfare and compel all members of society to give some value in return for the material received for their existence and comfort. As the

result of a universal reciprocity of labor, the total production of a nation's industry will be increased and with it the other social features constituting what is expressed by the general term of civilization. A comparison of the nations on earth will show this condition of society to be independent of the form of government, which is always the effect, not the cause of a higher or lower intellect.

We hear often spoken of "national economy," a discipline intended to teach the principles of the material existence of nations. In as far as its investigations are confined to the enumeration of accomplished facts, without any attempt to establish the immutable biological laws, it is of no value to any one, except for statistical reference. Since the first postulation for the comprehension of the social question is the recognition of the axiom, that everybody requires a certain amount of material for his existence and that for every one who does not produce it himself, some one else must do the work, it is just as absurd to treat consumption and production as two different factors, as it is to speak of labor and capital as two antagonistic elements in the social organization. The fact is, that everybody is and must be a consumer, but not necessarily a producer.

CHAPTER XII.

INDIVIDUAL LABOR AND ITS VALUE.—HONESTY.—THE FITTEST IN THE STRUGGLE OF EXISTENCE.

Reviewing the history of mankind, it seems impossible that anybody could be so blind as to deny its true character, the manifestation of the struggle of existence between races and nations. No other right is acknowledged and respected but brute force, which may consist in numbers or in mechanical appliances which increase immensely the beligerent capacity of the single individual and therefore equal the effect of numbers. If we investigate the cause of the superior power of the civilized nations, we find it in the compliance with the social laws, indispensable for the co-existence of large numbers on the limited space afforded by the configuration of the continents. As the first principle, we found the law of labor, under the system of division of labor, the fundament of civilization. The struggle of existence among the single individuals comprising a nation led to a division of the functions necessary for the maintenance of its integrity and welfare, or considered so by the people. In the preceding chapter it was shown that no physical necessity exists for some of these occupations and that they owe their existence solely to the inheritance from our savage ancestors. Such institutions as religion, hereditary monarchy, etc., base their claim for recognition on "historical right," which indeed is the only title for existence they can show and which will vanish instantly as soon as the masses, whose ignorance and brutality upholds these institutions, attain a higher degree of intellect,—progress.

Starting from the only true and possible proposition that

life has neither any other object nor destiny beyond its earthly existence, it follows that it must be self-sufficient, that its cultivation must be the only rational aim; in fact, the only duty imposed upon us by nature, whose creatures we are. Individual life has value only for itself, but since a large number of individuals are living together and dependent upon each other, our natural instincts must be

held within such limits as the concession of equal rights for happiness to our fellow men demands. Within these limits, however, personal egoism is the only rational and possible principle; everybody lives for himself, and only for himself; in his work alone consists his value for the other members of society.

(To be continued.)

In The Beginning

LIFE AND THE ETHEREAL CANOPY.—THEIR RELATIVE POSITIONS.—RADIUM A FUNDAMENTAL.

(C. M. McDonald.)

So much has been lately written about the relations of life to nature, that it would seem to be unwarranted for a layman to take issue with the eminent "scientists" concerning the foundation of our present existence. Yet when considering the materialistic exigencies on a divergence of opinion, all have taken the tangent of existing facts as proven, to settle thereby the unproven facts of the fountain head of the tangent.

First—Let us analyze matter. Units (atoms) or molecules must have a separation from some source. The cosmical nebulae forming the present numerous worlds, is often used to represent the beginning of our solar system. The question arises: How could a nebulae have begun its rotation of its own accord? Looking to this foundation, we find the same hint exists in natural law, as in religious law, of evolution. Either represents and means, to evolve from something beyond, and if recognized religiously as a greater, it must also, in the natural or scientific, be so classed, by reason of the fact that its effect is the result of a **first cause**.

There being no conception of infinite space, then space must be eliminated as a factor in both. Absolute space, or a vacuum, being impossible, we find that the "space," so commonly used, is merely a "surrounding hypothetical imagination," and being an "infinite", it must contain both the so-called Jehovah of the Religions, and the Beginning of the laws of evolution. We now find ourselves at the remotest point of a beginning, and of the substance with which to start we must now deal.

An atom, or molecule, has always been recognized as the smallest particle of our imagination, of a thing to exist in a form. Science has demonstrated that an atom has a certain unknown force, by which one is attracted to another: i. e. as a singular, it can, of its own volition, convert itself into a plural, but from a plural of atoms no singular can deflect itself of its own accord. To illustrate: Every magnet contains both poles, and when the magnet is broken, either the North or the South will contain and produce both, **ad infinitum**. There has been but one substance so far produced that can dissimilate the atom, and that is radium.

In the production of this chemical its most vital element seems to have been overlooked. The Curie's having proved that radium loses practically none of its force though constantly discharging force, it brings us back to the point, like unto a vacuum, that the chemical in its absolute pure state, cannot be produced, for the same reason that the positive vacuum of abso-

lute space cannot exist, its own elements being more powerful than any outside interference, and it would be left, in order to make its purity, to throw off or discharge the remaining fault, by the use of a lever and fulcrum composed of its own pure elements. It would be as easy to conceive that as to conceive the end of space.

Radium thus is shown to be the only element of self-living matter known. That it is almost pure is more convincing, showing that in the pure state it would be the going back into evolution, or into a dormant. That it can discharge force and at the same time not lose its own force, shows it to be a non-dormant factor, or that it is capable of and does agitate within its environments, continually. Its particles, as shown above, having made an "atom" divisible into thousands of parts, the idea of a "cosmical dust," or hypothetical beginning, is thus disabused. As is well known to both scientist and layman, anything "active" means the "effecting" of surrounding matter by any given substance. Then we speak of "radio-active" as being the effect produced by radium.

To produce cause and effect, the "active" cause does produce an effect, but as in the singular and plural of atoms, effect can not diffuse itself into, or look back to, a cause.

Radium, being a non-dormant, its particles, if any there be, are always active. It discharges "activity" (force) and at the same time its own activity (force) is not affected by its own discharge. Therefore, we conceive it to be so small in its incipency as to occupy no space, or in other words, it and "space" are synonymous. As space is inconceivable in its beginning or ending, its correlative is radio-activity. The radium particle is absolutely an unknown element, or it has no particle or substance to compare with the atom or molecule, and we can only accept it, in the light of science, as being like space—a perfect infinite or natural law, and in the light of Religious beliefs, as being the other power, or spiritual law.

Radium being, as proven by the Curie's, an absolute active force, any beginning of a nebulae was merely the coralling of its own infinitives, the natural evolution of its own non-dormant state of being. To propose that there was an actual beginning of anything, is to throw insult into the face of Natural Law, because neither could have begun of its own accord, as a thing being.

Query: The substance with which we start, or the original composite of a nebulae, is radio-activity, or matter as infinite as space, and when the religious speak of "Jehovah" as always having been, they mean the never-beginning or ending of radio-activity—a thing we have demonstrated which will discharge power and at the same time not lose any of its own.

(Materialism and the life after death theory, will be discussed in another article.)

Parker Sercombe Attends Funeral

The following is a newspaper report of the obsequies attending the funeral of Archibald Livingston, who recently died at Monticello, Iowa. The address was delivered by Parker H. Sercombe, Editor of Tomorrow Magazine, who had been selected for that purpose. Mr. Sercombe said in part—

"In accordance with a custom as old as antiquity, we are met here to perform the last sad rites over your friend and neighbor, Archibald Livingston. You are assembled in this instance to pay tribute to the passing of a real man of the type of Paine, Ingersoll and Franklin, a man with the courage of his convictions, ready in the interest of his mental integrity to speak his belief according to his conviction, with regard to the unpreparedness of human society or the strength of the opposition that might be hurled against him.

"Archibald Livingston was a man, who loved nature. He was a friend to the flowers, the trees and the birds. As far as he could prevent it he would not permit any living thing to suffer needless death. He loved the sunshine and the storm and would often go out in the darkness of the night to commune with the thunder and lightning and study the language of the invisible forces. His inherent gentleness, integrity and love of nature is characteristic of the true rationalist of him, who receives his revelation through the study of life and nature, making comparison of the basic law discovered in each field of inquiry.

"In the course of time, in the struggle of mankind to place intelligence on a working basis, there has been but few men with the courage and steadfastness and moral integrity to stand forth supreme among their fellows and fight for a cause or a belief that bore the stigma of unpopularity.

"It has always been a favorite slogan of the orthodox church men to assume that the rationalist, the non-believer in the traditional forms of mysticism, handed down from antiquity, offered no hope for the living and no solace for the dead; but an examination of the concepts and feelings of the true rationalist discloses a warrant for the living so profound, with an altruism so deep, as to place all forms of selfish motives for attaining everlasting life in complete oblivion.

"To work for the love of it, to live for the joy of it, to realize that day by day we are our own creators, shaping mind and body in accordance with our mind and acts, to realize that future perfection is not to be attained through the individual, but through a process in which all the units

of the social organization take part, it is to acquire an outlook upon life and an outlook upon self that transcends the fondest dreams of all the saints and seers who have pestered the pathway of a poor deluded world.

"Instead of toiling through life with a selfish aim of securing an exceptional good seat on the grandstand of everlasting glory and holding this greedy hope as the basis of doing good deeds in this world, the rationalist's mind as represented by our deceased friend is satisfied to live nobly, toil manfully, deal generously and dine on simple fare, all in the interest of improving and upholding the unit of racial life entrusted to his keeping.

"It matters not whether the great world process, the universal system of experimentation, which has been called Jove, God, Evolution and the life force, is recognized or not. It moves majestically onward, always changing, always improving, and this is the force employed by Luther Burbank and others in bringing all fruits and vegetable forms to a state of higher perfection.

"It was the especial wish of the deceased that at this meeting conducted in his memory, that this justification for his belief through life should be carefully pointed out—perhaps not for the benefit of influencing or changing the ideas of his friends and neighbors who are present, but rather to indicate that there is peace and joy surpassing all understanding, even in the creed of a Freethinker and rationalist.

"No better evidence of the noble spirit of the deceased could be offered than the bequest of practically his entire fortune to a public benefaction in the interest of all the people of Monticello and vicinity. A monument to his public spirit, and an unquestioned evidence of his utilitarian ideas."

OLD CHILDREN'S TOYS.

What the Orthodox Would Give if They Had It,—But Have They?

(By Norman Murray.)

There is a story told of an Irishman who sent for a lawyer and told him he wanted to make his will. The lawyer came with papers, pen and ink, and witnesses to witness Pat's last will and testament. Pat willed one hundred pounds to his uncle; fifty pounds to his cousin, and a liberal amount to various other friends.

The lawyer expressed surprise at the extent of Pat's wealth, to which Pat answered: "Shure, I have nothing at all, at all, but that is what I would give them if I had it."

So it is with religion. The truth of it has practically nothing at all to do with its acceptance by mankind. The fakir studies the people and examines precedents to find out what will take. A man has been leading a bad life and after awhile he begins to have remorse, and he is afraid of "Something." The priest finds this weakness out, and makes the patient feel even worse than he did before; then the priest begins to work the confidence game. The greatest confidence game in the history of the human race is that "salvation filmdam game."

A man has lived a life of vice and dishonesty and the reminders of his conscience tell him he has acted badly and he deserves punishment; and along comes the priest and tells him if he only believes a certain formula the punishment he so justly deserves will be charged to Jesus Christ, a peasant carpenter, who is supposed to have been crucified 2,000 years ago. The people like to be humbugged, and there you are.

The little girl has a toy baby, to which she devotes particular attention in imitation of the attention mama pays to a live baby. The little boy has a toy horse, to which he talks, as he hears an adult talk to a real live horse. Men have been making gods from the earliest accounts we have of them, and it is safe to prophesy that they will continue to do so to the end of the chapter. We can get children, however, to change their toys, particularly if they are dangerous, when they begin to play with knives and matches. It appears to me that something of the same nature might be tried with many who are afflicted with the Christian superstition.

For instance, I am strongly of the opinion that the natural love of ancestors to be found in all races of mankind, have not yet been used to such an advantage as it might be by anti-clericals. To give an illustration: My own name "Norman" is "Tormold" in Gaelic, which is evidently derived from the old Norse god Thor. Of late years when I want to tease my Christian friends, I tell them that as I am named after a better god than the god of the Jews, I don't see why I should go to the Jews for either a god or a religion.

Then I tell them that as my own ancestors, the Vikings, were sea pirates and the ancestors of the Jews were land pirates, I couldn't see why I should go to Palestine to seek for heroes.

This method has a double advantage. It amuses the audience and lessens the hostility to the propagandist.

Of late years there has been too much of what in military language is called frontal attacks, in the Freethought movement.

Montreal, Canada.

Twittering of Tom-tits

When a Small Bore Preacher Wants to
Make a Hit He Always Lights on
Thomas Paine.

(By Charles H. Schwartz.)

We hear so often of intellectual tom-tits, who must needs take a fall out of Thomas Paine, that I feel a few words on the subject of the twittering tom-tits will not come amiss. I have particularly in mind a little Methodist dominee over in Indiana who indulges in these twitterings, whenever two or three or gathered together, and he among them.

The Rev. Coeur de Asinus, which by the way is not his name, is one of the noisiest of these intellectual tom-tits, that feel it their duty to misrepresent real men. "Behold the live jackass that kicks the dead lion!" said the Rev. Minot J. Savage a few days after the death of Col. Ingersoll, in speaking of those who were befouling the atmosphere with their abuse of the great agnostic.

The Rev. Coeur "scorns to read the writings of Thomas Paine," so he says. In that case, how in the name of the Christ he glorifies does he know anything about Paine? Isn't it obvious to even a careless reader that such a man could kneel at the door of a ladies' convention for hours, if not discovered, and look through the key-hole with both eyes at once?

"Narrow-minded," did you say? Oh, just a few.

I have so far tried to give the Rev. the benefit of the doubt,—that is to say, to admit he had not read Paine, and therefore did not know any better. On the other hand, I am inclined to believe he has read the Age of Reason, and that he does not know it is irrefragable; that it has never been refuted, and that it is the most dangerous criticism ever written of the so-called holy bible. The Rev. Coeur de Asinus knows full well that should his congregation read the Age of Reason without fear or favor, that is to say, without prejudice, he would no longer be able to—

"Sail through the world on flowery beds of ease,

While others toil to bring to him his daily bread and cheese."

In the very beginning of the Age of Reason, which was written during the stormy period of the beginning of the French Republic, Paine tells us he is writing the book to preserve religion,—that "the total abolition of the whole national order of

the priesthood renders such a work necessary, lest in the general wreck of superstition we lose sight of morality, of humanity, and of theology that is true.

I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life.

I believe in the equality of man; and I believe that religious duties consist of doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow creatures happy.

Then he adds, that lest he be accused of believing many things in addition to these, he must also mention a few things he does not believe:

"I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish, Roman, Greek, Arabian, Protestant, or any church I know of. My mind is my own church.

"It is necessary to the happiness of man that he be mentally faithful to himself.

"Indulgence does not consist in believing or disbelieving; it consists in professing to believe what one does not believe.

Beware, Dr. Asinus and others! I fear lest ye are even as one of these—indulgers.

The contention of an pulpit donkeys and their followers is that Paine was an Atheist, and that Atheism tended to lower, if not destroy, the moral status of mankind. This contention itself is hypocrisy, for all who read his works know full well that he was no Atheist.

Thomas Paine believed that all religion was the result of necessity, weakness and fear. That the "institution of churches appeared no other than human inventions set up to enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit."

The fact that the revenues of the Roman Catholic Church, in America alone, reach the enormous total of \$60,000,000 a year, would seem to prove the truth of his belief.

Thomas Paine believed that no form of life could create itself; this implied belief in a creator, or as he says, a "first cause, and this first cause man called God.

"Deism teaches us without the possibility of being deceived, all that is necessary or proper to be known. The Creation is the Bible of the Deist. He there reads in the hand-writing of the Creator himself, the certainty of his existence and the immutability of his power, and all other Bibles and Testaments are to him forgeries."

"The notion of a Trinity of Gods has enfeebled the belief of one God. A multiplication of beliefs acts as a division of belief, and in proportion as anything is divided it is weakened."

"It is the duty incumbent on every true

Deist, that he vindicate the moral justice of God against the calumny of the Bible. The true Deist has but one Deity, and his religion consists in contemplating the power, wisdom and benignity of the Deity in his works and in endeavoring to imitate him in everything moral, scientific and mechanical."

"If ever a universal religion should prevail, it will not be by believing anything new, but in getting rid of redundancies, and believing as man believed at first. Adam, if ever there was such a man, was the first Deist; but in the meantime let every man follow as he has a right to do, the religion and the worship he prefers."

"What is it we have learned from this pretended thing called revealed religion? Nothing that is useful to man, and everything that is dishonorable to his maker. What is it the Bible teaches us?—rapine, cruelty and murder. What is it the Testament teaches us?—to believe that the Almighty committed debauchery with a woman engaged to be married, and the belief of this debauchery is called faith."

"Yes, there is a Word of God; there is a revelation. THE WORD OF GOD IS THE CREATION WE BEHOLD; and it is this Word which no human invention can counterfeit or alter, that God speaketh universally to man."

Note the respect shown the Deity and all pertaining to him, in Paine's fluent use of capital letters throughout the Age of Reason. Is this not proof of his reverence for Almighty God, as he understood him? And if there is one note of insincerity in the whole work, I have failed to find it. It seems useless to write more on this subject, as the quotations given should be sufficient for the purpose of this article. The average Freethinker is familiar with the writings of Paine, but this paper may fall into the hands of some who do not know, for there are many who do not know. A neighbor, when told what the subject of the Crapsey-Mangasarian debate was, said: "Why, I didn't know anyone ever doubted that Christ actually lived."

If the class of people who listen to the Brayings of the Rev. Coeur de Asinus, and the equally large class who absorb with avidity the hypocritical spoutings of Theodorus Bombasticus Roosevelt could be induced to give the Age of Reason the time for a careful reading, thousands of these purveyors of cant and credulity might become desirable citizens, and engage in the manufacture of potatoes, pumpkin-cabbages and other condiments, instead of this dead sea food for the soul.

Basalt, Colo.

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EDUCATION AND THE CHURCH.

The paid advocates of Christianity are now becoming cognizant of the fact that education, in its proper branches, is not conducive to their side of the orthodox issues.

At no previous age, since the dawn of civilization, has infidelity, or opposition to superstitious faith, been more prevalent than it is now, and at no age has education been more general. The claim may be made, however, that ministers are educated men, that they must be educated before being acceptable to the church authorities, and that by reason thereof, all education is not infidel, or atheistic. But this is an erroneous impression, for ministers are simply trained; they are not educated, and any domesticated animal can be utilized in an almost similar manner. Training is not really education.

The ideas thus formulated seems to have taken hold of the mind and brain of Len G. Broughton, pastor of the Tabernacle Baptist Church, at Atlanta, Georgia, for he is reported, in a recent sermon, to have denounced Harvard, the University of Chicago, and the Syracuse University, New York as being hotbeds of infidelity, wherein certain specific doctrines concerning the bible and the church are taught by the professors, which, he asserts, is designed and intended to "destroy the confidence of the world in the bible."

The design, or the intent, must be a figment of the

pastor's imagination. There is no design, no intent, in education. All education is secular. It is to lay before mankind the simple facts of nature, enabling him to understand the law of life and of living, and to fit him to meet the issues that must inevitably confront him as he enters upon the supreme battle. As education is based upon fact, it is not the fault of education if it leads from the bible, or the Christian religion, but the fault of both bible and religion, in that they are contrary to fact and must bear the responsibility of their own error.

But Dr. Broughton is away behind the times if he has but recently made the discovery that the Christian church is pandering to "commercialism". This pandering has been going on ever since its institution under Constantine. The latter pandered to commercialism and power when he pretended to embrace the new faith. Thousands of its early converts were actuated by similar motives, or, at least, motives of a personal character and a desire for gain. Politicians will join the church to get votes. Sordid business men will do the same thing to win customers and trade. Milliners find it profitable to attend church in order to curry favor with the women, who are likely to become customers, and at the same time to study the fashions and find out if she is in vogue. The preacher preaches for money. The best singers in the choir sing for pay. In many instances, with both singer and preacher, written contracts are entered into, the one to secure and hold the service sought, and the other to get a cinch on the cash end of the bargain.

The charge is made by Dr. Broughton, however, that the members of the faculties in charge of the educational institutions named, are simply teaching religious heresies "to please the multi-millionaires," and that the latter who are endowing these institutions with their wealth, are only trading "on this desire for money in order to destroy Christian education" and to "paganize the educational institutions of the country." The wealthy men whom he criticizes are Rockefeller and Carnegie, and he urges the Baptist denomination to say to them: "Let the money of Rockefeller and Carnegie perish with them."

Would that some power, human if possible, divine if there be such, so influence all the church congregations in the country to refuse the gifts of money made to them, and we predict that there would not be a church remaining in good standing in the country within twelve months thereafter. Without money would the cause of Jesus, the carpenter, be in vain. Without money the church would retard more rapidly than she grew to power. It is only by the use of money that the church is now able to exist and to deprive it of the vast revenues now flowing into her coffers would mean a speedy and everlasting death. Once the people let go of Christian dogma they will never return to it.

It is gratifying, however, to realize that here and there some paid advocate of the dark faith is coming to his senses. Whether they will it or not, education will take the people

out of the church, and the lack of money will act as a barrier to further progress. The people need more education. Many are not sufficiently educated even under existing conditions, and in some instances the church is striving, and in others it has succeeded, in so leavening education with theology as to destroy the value of the former for the practical affairs of life.

THE CHURCH AND PROGRESS.

Orthodox Christianity has advanced only by constantly changing its creeds, doctrines and definitions.

These changes are forced upon its adherents and advocates by reason of the mental accumulations of the ages which expose the false, extol the true and explain the known.

If Christianity of today is better in its outward aspect than the Christianity of yesterday, it is merely because a better class exist today than existed yesterday, and Christianity is fortunate enough to claim some of these among its membership.

The Christian religion never did and never will feed upon the intellect. It exists upon sentiment alone. Christian believers do not actually know, they only feel that they know, and imagine their feelings will make up for lack of knowledge. Based as it is, upon a supposed revelation from its god, Christianity cannot improve of itself, because the revelation cannot change. Personal progress must be denied to all religions founded upon revelation. If Christianity has progressed, one or two causes must have produced the progression. Either Christianity has abandoned its revelation or it has given the revelation a new definition in order to comport with the intelligent demands of the age. Such changes can be but shifting sands, shoals of ultimate destruction, for any religious system that will change doctrines and definitions in order to win favor and public support.

It was reported that when a certain pugilist met with defeat, his disheartened supporters cried out "Back to the mines," and so it is with the disgusted and half-hearted supporters of the Christian form of faith; witnessing defeat after defeat in the intellectual arena, they indignantly cry "Back to the old forms," and thus we hear public men declare that the religion of their mother is good enough for them. Those among the worshippers in Christian pews demanding a return to first theological principles, are the most consistent of all. The modern advocates of change are digging a pit-fall for the church. As a matter of fact, Christianity is in itself incapable of advancement, no matter how much the outward form may change. Nor does it follow that any change Christianity may make is for the better. Conditions may change, but the essence must remain one and the same.

Christianity has ever been a grim shadow o'er the portals of civilization. With hand of steel and the brain of a hyena, it has fought human advancement at every step.

But progress could not be stopped altogether. It may be temporarily retarded, but not forever hindered. Christianity fell into the maelstrom and by the might and power of the cataract it has been swept onward in spite of itself.

GOD AN INVENTION OF MAN.

Every race or nation has had its own peculiar and characteristic gods. It is recorded that the ancient Greeks had upwards of thirty thousand deities; in fact, they created a god for every physical phenomena, every element, every passion, every feeling, and every pleasure. All have had their mythological account of a supposed creation. When properly analyzed, the god of the bible will be found to represent all the gods of Greece, in that the innumerable parts and passions, powers and privileges, assigned to him and conferred upon him, is simply a blending of many gods into one god as a matter of individual taste and convenience.

And yet, in spite of criticism and doubt, a belief in god came as one of the natural results of human ignorance. Logical or illogical, god was the only answer ignorance could find for phenomena it did not and could not understand. Every human being who has gazed upon the vast panorama of the universe, though it may have been but with the eyes of a child, has inevitably felt a longing to solve, however imperfectly, that which Haeckel has denominated the "riddle of the universe," and has, unconsciously or consciously, elaborated in his own mind some sort of a theory as to the why and wherefore of what he sees. In more remote periods of time, men were not so vastly different from what they are now in respect of this important inquiry. But in those ages men did not have the knowledge or experience that men have and enjoy today. Much of what was consigned to the realm of the unknown yesterday, is today brought within the realms of the known. The mere existence of cosmogonies in the religion of every nation, both ancient and modern, is proof sufficient of the desire of the human mind to know something of the origin of the earth, of man himself, and material substances. The riddle became perplexing. It was a mystery. No solution appeared that was feasible. Men resorted to invention and they gave birth to a god as an answer to all things, and with this, investigation was suspended for ages.

Apart from the profound problems which have all along lain at the bottom of human existence, men have in all ages invented theories to explain the common phenomena of the material universe. Many of these theories, however varied in their details, upon examination turn out to have a common root, and to some extent are based on the same elements. Not until modern geology put forward its own theories, now indisputable, did the old theories begin to disintegrate and decay. It has been maintained, principally by the metaphysicians, and then only as a hypothesis, that there exists in the mind of man an inherent principle

by virtue of which he believes and expects that what has been, will be; and that the course of nature has been and will continue to be an uninterrupted one. So far, however, from any such belief existing as a necessary consequence of the constitution of the human mind, the real fact seems to be that the contrary belief has been almost universally prevalent. In all the old religious systems the order of the universe has been regarded as distinctly unstable, mutable and temporary. A beginning and an end have always and everywhere been assumed, and at either extremity ignorance has stationed a god. All religions are built upon the hypothesis of a liability to constant interruption of the course of terrestrial events, at the whim and pleasure of a god. Not one of the creeds known to man ever attained body and shape without containing, in some form or another, a belief in the existence of periodical convulsions, caused by the caprice of some deity.

In spite of all such beliefs and in spite of all apparent violations of the orderly continuity of natural events, the sequence of phenomena has in reality been a regular and uninterrupted one. The vast changes that are known to have transpired are but the results of the slow and ceaseless workings of the ordinary physical forces, through enormously prolonged periods. The inventors of the Christian system could penetrate no further in the dark, backward and abyss of time, beyond a few hundred years, and here, in their supreme ignorance, they fixed the beginning of time. Their knowledge of humanity was extremely limited; in fact, scarcely extending beyond their own tribal relations, and they vainly imagined themselves the sum and substance of all. Having, to their own satisfaction, fixed a beginning, they conceived that there must come an end, and so the two extremities of all existence were invented and taught. Mysteries yet abounded. To meet these emergencies they created an illogical and impossible god and believed they had found an answer.

God was a gigantic mistake. God was the most unhappy invention that emanated from the brain of man. God became a monstrous instrument of torture, an almighty fount of human misery and suffering. Crafty and cunning men became the expounders of the supposed laws of this god and turned the earth into a veritable cesspool of iniquity and cruelty. Ignorant man bestowed the wondrous glories of the universe upon the creature of his imagination. Ignorant man believed that the god of his invention had hung the midnight heavens with patines of pure gold and had painted the rings of Saturn for his finite wondering eyes to behold.

Did man but know that his very existence is but an unimportant incident in the history of the universe, mere infusoria born of heat and moisture,—perishing when the moisture is eliminated or the heat becomes greater or less, he would not have invented a god to frighten the minds of his fellowmen. Had man never appeared, the mountains would have reared their rugged crests to meet the glory of the unrisen sun, the purple mists would have

hovered o'er the valleys, the rivers would have rolled onward to the sea, the tides ebbcd and flowed; not a star would have fallen from the firmament, not a planet hesitated in its course, not a drop of water or a grain of sand would have been more or less—had man never been.

Then why presume so much? Yesterday is forgotten. Tomorrow is unknown. We toil and strive here to transform some particles of matter into various shapes, but we can create nothing, destroy nothing.

God, being but a creation of man, and man not being capable of creating aught tangible, god is intangible—nothing.

WHAT IN PLACE OF CHRISTIANITY?

The question propounded by the caption of this article is not a new one to the many who valiantly defended the cause of Freethought against Christian advocates, and yet, to the superstitious mind, it is not always that a suitable answer can be given. What would satisfy one would leave another in doubt, or create a suspicion, and in either event, but little of material gain would result. The educated, well-meaning mind may be able to understand, to realise, and ultimately, to know, but the ignorant mind demands a temporizing that may not be always suitable, or available.

In the first place, let it be understood, simple Christianity is but a mere form of faith, a form of worship, pretending to know the object to be worshipped and the results to be secured thereby. It assumes a god, clothes him with purely human attributes, makes him both vengeful and forgiving, subject to changing moods and whims, capable of being moved by prayer, and prescribes certain formulas that must be complied with in order to reach and acquire and enjoy a fanciful state of bliss when the fitful fever of life is o'er. This is practically all there is to Christianity. An unquestioning, undoubting belief in such things, an observance of its rites, and a liberal contribution for the promotion of such a theological fantasy, wins the brand of Christian character and marks its possessor as fit for the enjoyment of ethereal joy. Beyond this, Christianity has nothing to do. The charitable enterprises through such institutions as hospitals and colleges, constitute no part or portion of Christianity, for these would continue to be though every church in Christendom should be destroyed. They did not begin with Christianity, and they will live on long ages after Christianity has been placed on the shelf of antiquity. It is not necessary to be a Christian believer in order to be humane, good, kind, or charitable, for all of these virtues were known before Christian belief began to be; they exist now independently of such a belief, and will become of greater moral worth to man when Christianity has fallen into disuse.

Regarding Christianity as a mere phase of superstition and senseless worship, demanding enormous tolls from the people without giving any equivalent therefor, we need nothing, ask for nothing, and would offer nothing in its

place. Under Christian instruction the world is merely a playground for the devil of its theology to disport in at pleasure, and to get the minds of men and women, who still support the system, rid of such a belief, would be a decided humane advantage, and nothing need be asked for as a substitute. Under Christian tuition Nature was cursed by its god and those who undertook to study Nature were denounced as sorcerers. With the advancement of knowledge and the achievements of science, the church has practically admitted its error, and here is another step forward, for which nothing has been sought in lieu thereof.

When we speak or write of destroying the churches, let it be known that it is not intended that the buildings, known as church buildings, in which so-called Christians assemble to worship every Sunday, are to be destroyed, for it is doubtful if they can be, but it is meant that the superstitions taught and practiced within their walls, the meaningless mummeries and sophistries, will be eliminated, the old god forgotten and the new humanity enthroned. Preachers are to become teachers. Real human effort is to take the place of futile prayer, work made into worship, and each unit of society taught to render real service for favors and benefits sought and desired. It does not follow that because the church insists that what it teaches is true, that it must be true. Men have realized too well what this means. The lessons of history, the demonstrations of modern science, the intelligent thought of the world, all point to the erroneous suppositions and assumptions of the orthodox Christian church, and these very elements combine upon the proposition that the world would lose nothing by the complete eradication of Christian superstition, and that humanity could get along without it, better than it has done with it.

Expose error and truth will immediately take its place. Every honest thinker desires that error be uprooted. None are interested so much as to what comes in its place, so long as another error is not substituted for it. From the mental and material accumulations of great minds the people everywhere are growing better, nobler and grander, not only in their numbers but in their hearts and minds, and these give a higher and a nobler purpose to life. These are now struggling, toiling, and striving for a realization of that great day when the hopes of Whittier may be realized, as he wrote:

"Oh, speed the day when liberty and love and truth and light throughout the land be known."

Then in place of the noxious products of Christian superstition we would, as Freethinkers, plant the seeds of unalloyed love and service in every human heart. We would fill up the bottomless pit with the remnants of dead theologies and plant the tree of knowledge, of science and education in a more fruitful soil. We would put sunshine into every human life. We would wrest the scepter of authority from god and place it in the hand of man.

THE PAINE CENTENNIAL.

While it is gratifying to learn, through Secretary Elliott of the Paine Memorial Society, that some of the Blade readers have gallantly made contributions to aid in defraying the expenses of the coming Centennial, yet it is a source of regret to know that funds are still lacking to make this celebration what it ought to be and what it must be.

The Blade is fully cognizant of the fact that the business and financial depression has wrought sad havoc with many pocket-books, as its own exchequer will bear witness, but if ever there could be a time when the united efforts of Freethinkers were actually and positively needed, that time is now, and it centers upon and about the Paine Centennial.

But little time remains. The Centennial will be held this month. It is drawing nigh upon us. Every Freethinker in the country will be anxious that it meet with success. Many cannot afford to make a donation. There are others who can. Make an examination of your pocket and if you have a little spare change, some that you can afford and will not miss much, send it to the managers of the Centennial, but their efforts may be productive of the best results.

Contributions may be sent direct to Dr. E. B. Foote, 120 Lexington Avenue, New York City, or when renewing your subscription you may send a small sum additional through the Blade and it will be forwarded in your name.

Do not delay much longer or you may be too late to be of that practical service you intend.

About forty preachers of the Campbellite persuasion met in Lexington this past week for the purpose of discussing and formulating plans for "the betterment of the difficulties encountered by the ministers in the carrying out of their work." It is worth something to know that there exists what is regarded as "difficulties" for only a few short years ago the ministers had easy sailing. Not so very long, and these difficulties will increase even far beyond where they are today.

In having the cut made for the publication of the portrait of Parker H. Sercombe, which appeared in our issue of April 18, last, the Blade unintentionally omitted any mention of the fact that the original picture was copyrighted by F. S. & M. V. Fox, photographers, of Chicago. This copyright had escaped our notice, the engraver had also failed to observe it, and the Blade gladly offers this explanation that our readers may know the facts.

Does any reader wish a bound volume of the Blade for 1908? We have just two copies left. The first two to send in 3.50 will get one each and their names printed on the cover in gold letters.

Infidelity and Socialism

They Are So Closely Related That One is a Part of the Other.—Akin by Policy and Practice.

(By Joe B. Thorn.)

There are a great many Socialists who are Infidels. There is a saying that an ignorant person is the hardest to convert to Socialism. The same is true about Infidelity. The former stands for physical freedom, while the latter stands for mental freedom.

Socialism.

Lycurgus had principles in his government which are akin to some of the principles of Socialism of today. And yet his government in many respects was just the opposite of modern Socialism. Slavery was the greatest crime that Sparta tolerated. In regard to this slavery, the servants as a rule, were better off than our proletariat of today. At least, they got something to eat and didn't have to work fourteen or fifteen hours a day at break-neck speed in an ill-kept factory.

Socialism is a "foregone conclusion." It won't come all of a sudden, but will rather evolve slowly, but surely, from private ownership to public ownership.

The gas company in New York says that the 80-cent gas law in New York means confiscation. This company has stolen a great amount of money from the people, but somehow the word "confiscation" don't just fit in here. I suppose the word "stolen" would fit better.

Under our present system, man is forced by sheer necessity to destroy and waste the resources of his country to obtain a bare living. This is forced upon him by a combination of capital.

At the rate we are going now, a few hundred years hence and our posterity will be in possession of one gigantic Sahara.

The American civilization will prove itself to be the most expensive thing of its kind that future generations shall witness, unless this wild-cat way of doing things is put to an end. The carelessness of the corporations in mining, in lumbering, etc., and the great waste resulting therefrom, will cause future America to become a modern Gobi.

You ask a cure for these things. I say Socialism. Under a Socialistic form of government the people would control all of these things, and then if they showed no better judgment than to continue these excesses it would be their own lookout.

In my opinion, the world is not ready for international Socialism. We should first

strive for national and then for international Socialism. First secure your halter, and then catch your horse. Let our motto be: "All workers and no drones."

America has a great many uncrowned kings. Our great millionaires and multimillionaires possess their great kingdoms and dukedoms, nay, everything save title. Here a question arises: Is this a moral right? You might as well ask if it were a moral right to steal. The terms are different, but the results are the same.

Here's a big mining concern: It puts in a piece of machinery that can do the work of fifty men in one day. Consequently 49 men are thrown out of work. Wouldn't it be much better if the entire 50 were allowed to work under the common ownership of the concern for so long, and then quit?

Socialism does not mean confiscation. It means the gradual assumption of stolen rights.

Man has rushed pell-mell through his politics without considering that the paltry sum of 25 or 50 cents for his vote means just four years longer of enslavement.

The machinery of Wall Street controls at present the destiny of American humanity, and it is well oiled with victims. Perhaps I should not use "destiny" in the above sentence, for the American producers are capable of thrusting this alien parasite out of business,—merely by that yet unstolen sign of liberty—the ballot.

This is "Free Speech America", yet a peaceable congregation of American laborers, petitioning their rights, is termed Anarchistic, and the result is, the assembly is cleared by resort to violence, if necessary.

Generally speaking, the hardest laborers are greatest oppressed. God deserves great credit for his money invested in the Trinity Church. Her tenements are declared to be the worst kept in New York; yet that civilized creature called Man must inhabit these sty's that a pig would be ashamed to call his own.

There are thousands of "willing to work" American people that "hath not where to lay their heads." The rich man has stolen the poor man's pillow.

The people are capable of righting these wrongs. By merely voting the red ticket they will find that a bad beginning has a good end."

Infidelity.

I think that is a beautiful word, but don't just exactly like the modern use of the same.

What the mind is to the body, Free thought is to Socialism. You can't expect

to get good results physically and have your mind handicapped by a creed that prescribes which days to use your physical powers and which day to rest them.

Don't go like Jason, with one sandal on and the other off.

Religion and wealth ever go hand in hand. Wealth holds up the church, and the church in turn teaches servitude. I believe mental freedom as important as physical. If we are going to pull down the capitalists, let's give the church a place in the debris. What is the use of spending your life in studying the mysterious ways of God, and planting poisonous weeds of dogmas and creeds upon the fertile brain of an innocent child?

It is will power and not faith that is removing the mountains, digging Panama Canals, and making the earth habitable. That skulking form of midnight called "faith," is the same black war cloud that has enshrouded the earth for centuries.

Until recently only a spark of light has pierced the cloud here and there. But now the light is penetrating far and wide and bids fair to drive this monster of woe and distress far into the past, unwept and unmixed by a rejoicing humanity.

If you can take man and use a little faith, and when he dies he is transformed into an angel, please tell me how devils are manufactured.

Just now it is that an immortal soul and an immaterial God could see much fun in a material heaven (gold and precious stones), I can't make out. I suppose it is because I haven't the faith. Anyhow, we must make allowances for other people's peculiarities.

Will the heathen who never heard of God, or the three in one proposition, go to Hell? If not, what's the use of converting them and giving them ten chances to one of getting there (express prepaid.)

If you should love your enemies as your friends, is equivalent to saying: If I have got to love God I am going to love the Devil too.

Well, here's Socialism and mental liberty. Until man has attained these ends, he must expect to remain in his servile condition.

"How ere it be, it seems to me 'tis only noble;

Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple reason greater
Than Christian fraud."

W. F. Bozeman

Leesburg, Fla.,

Southern Fruit and Produce Broker. Melons a specialty. Fifteen years experience buying and shipping melons. Will, as usual, follow the business in Georgia, Alabama and Indiana.

MOONLIGHT DREAMING.

(By The Chaplain.)

Last night in the glory of moonlight,
When its sheen through my window
came bright,
Thought flowed from the mind's deepest
shadows
On the cross, and its priests and their
blight.
I thought of the millions,—imbeciles—
The women as well as the men,
Who know not, through Reason priest-
blighted
The "Wonders of Life" by a pen—

More mighty than all revelations that the
..Priests of the earth have proclaimed,
For he tells us Creation's grand story
In the way Evolution has named;
Slowly, so slowly, evolving
The wonders of Nature's great plan,
Till evolved the brains of a Haeckel—
The acme, the climax in man.

I thought of Saladin, the fearless,
In thought's imperial world,
Flashing a blade undaunted,
With his shafts of lightning hurled,
Always in the front of battle,
'Gainst the cross of Christ, and Rome,
Driving his steel in its "sacred heart,"—
Driving it surely home.

With the splendor of moonlight still shining
A Lady proud-born of the free,

Came to me in thought's wonder-vision
In her songs of sweet liberty,
That shall live when the cross is forgotten,
And its priesthood remembered no more,
For Florence was born in the purple,
With humanity true to the core.

With my room silver-lined in the moon-
light,
The beauty of solitude's world
Came flashing in thought's lofty grandeur—
Uplifting, ennobling, unfurled;
Then I lived for the moment exalted,
While the moon flashed its light on the
scene,
As I thought of the genius immortal
In the birth of our Josephine

I thought of a brave man, dreaming,
Who made Kentucky far famed,
Through the Truth he blazed in his paper,
And superstition shamed,
Till it hides its head, base lying,
Like the craven cowards of men,
Afrail of the "light eternal"
When Truth is guiding a pen

And here in the splendor of moonlight,
I thought of those fagots and flames
That circled and curled 'round a Bruno
And other of Freedom's proud names;
I thought of the rack, of the thumb-screw,
Felt the mold of damp dungeons there,
And vowed eternal damnation
To the priests of Christianity's lair

San Francisco, Calif

Freethought in the West.

..MOSIER, OREGON.—It no doubt seems
strange to you that I don't send my an-
swers to the questions in the Correspond-
ence School. I am situated on a home-
stead that I filed on December, 1904, here
in the great fruit region, among the Cas-
cade Mountains. I have no income, save
that which I derive from manual labor.
This labor consists in caring for fruit trees
and handling fruit for other persons, and
when at home I am improving a ranch or
my own. I began gathering cherries for
market last June, and was continuously
handling the various fruits of this section
until December. One of my neighbors has
over 5,000 boxes of apples. We had to
care for sick persons this winter, and it
seemed that I was never in a fit condition
of mind, or had sufficient time to answer
those questions in my study course.

I have read much in the text books, in
fact, half way through them, and I think
I am now so situated as to be able to take
up the courses with the class, and would
send in answers to all previous months'
questions with those that are now to fol-
low. Write and let me know what is your
desire regarding this matter, and I shall
comply with your wishes as soon as pos-
sible. I am willing to compensate you in
cash for any extra trouble I cause you. I
could not help my unfortunate position re-
garding this class work. I am delighted
with the studies, and shall pursue them to
the end of the entire year's course, whether
I am a member of the class or not. It is
the knowledge I desire, much more than
a diploma. I have two diplomas now that
have never used or "tacked up." It is a
pleasure to study, and I fully realize that I
know so little regarding Nature and her
immutable laws.

I am glad you have traveled over our
Pacific Coast country. I have lived 22
years on this coast, and have resided in
California, Oregon, Washington, and have
spent four years in the "Land of the Mid-
night Sun." I was not so lucky there in
finding nuggets as "Swift Water Bill" and
Anderson, of Dawson. I had many thrilling
experiences in that land, but am glad to
have seen some of Nature's wonders in
Alaska. A trip to Alaska on one of the fine
tourist ships during June, July or August,
through the "Inside Passage" is a pleasure
beyond language to express. Its grandeur
and sublimity, its towering peaks and
white-robed glaciers, with cataracts and
cascades pouring over their sea-bordered
cliffs, leaping hundreds of feet at a bound,
and landing into the Great Deep with roar
and tumult, amidst dazzling brightness of
all colors of the rainbow, which is vividly
seen along the crest of moving water,—
all makes a scene wonderful to behold. The
landscape is so diversified as we journey

The Blade's Correspondence

PROGRAM OF SPEAKERS.

OF THE SAN FRANCISCO MATERIAL-
IST ASSOCIATION.

For May—Every Friday Evening.

MAY 7th.

Science before Darwin and After.—By Wm.
McDevitt, LL. M., former Registrar of
the University of Washington.

MAY 14th.

The Mystery of Greek Art.—By E. Backus,
University Graduate and former editor
Saturday Evening Tribune.

MAY 21st.

Crime and Civilization.—By E. E. Kirk,
Attorney for Union Defense League.

MAY 28th.

Origin and Development of Superstition.—

By George E. Kendall, of England.

JUNE 4th.

The Motive Forces of Human Action.—By
Cameron H. King, Jr., Attorney-at-Law.

JUNE 11th.

Misconceptions of Spirit and Matter.—By
Prof. Overstreet, Dept. of Philosophy at
State University.

JUNE 18th.

The Most Wonderful Thing in the World.
—By Geo. E. Benham.

JUNE 25th.

The Atheist Shelley.—By Wm. McDevitt,
LL. M., former Registrar of the Uni-
versity of Washington.

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J. FRANTZ,

State Secretary and Local Organizer of the
Materialist Association.

along that monotony is dispensed with. As the vessel rounds an island, cape or promontory, a new scene presents itself with new and absorbing features. It is very interesting to see thousands of seals and many whales playing and frisking about in all directions.

Well, this is Ground Hog Day. The sun is shining warm, and if Mr. Hog is out he will doubtless see his shadow and go back to stay six weeks. Pshaw! What a hoax! Please pardon my long letter. I spent a week in Portland during the holidays. Had a good time at the theater and the Lodge. Also went to church Sunday at White Temple, and heard a 20-minute sermon. It was not so mediaeval as I listened to 20 years since. With best wishes to you in all your undertakings, I am, yours kindly.

—R. W. SIMPSON, Box 54.

Preacher Doesn't Know.

ZOAR, O.—I have mailed you under separate cover, a copy of the Cleveland Leader, where you will find marked on first page what Rev. George has to say regarding Patten, a Chicago speculator.

It has amused me to learn that the Rev. suggests the stopping of praying for our daily bread, and instead of that mete out punishment to Mr. Patten, which his god fails to do himself.

The Rev. is not posted in the grain business, and talks about something entirely out of his line. There is a shortage of wheat which has caused this advance, and no man could manipulate the grain markets in a way the Rev. says Patten is guilty of. Maybe the Rev. has seen a few copies of the Blade, and has lost faith in prayers. Anyway, he is taking a long step in the right direction when he favors the stopping of prayers, even if it is only temporarily. Accept my best wishes. I am your old friend.—PETER BIMELE.

THE PAINE CENTENNIAL.

Strong Talk from Secretary Elliott upon the Coming Celebration at New Rochelle.

(By James B. Elliott.)

The program for the commemoration of the centenary of the death of Thomas Paine to be held on Sunday and Monday, May 30-31st, at New Rochelle, is nearly complete. The expenses will be great, and among the number of distinguished men who have been invited to attend are Wu Ting Fang, Elbert Hubbard, Booker Washington, etc. Those wishing their names recorded on the roll of honor, should write at once for programs.

A few have responded to the call in the Blade, but Missouri, Mississippi, liberty-loving Rhode Island, and no New England

are yet in. Kentucky and North Carolina have been heard from. The largest subscription has come from California; Ohio stands next. There are but a few weeks yet; so respond at once.

I enclose program of the National Federation of Religious Liberals' Meeting in this city; also some of the addresses. They meet in the Quaker Meeting House, and all of the addresses show the great influence of the religion of Thomas Paine as proclaimed more than a century ago. I am inspired by the progress made and the liberality of the speakers at the meeting.

I am discouraged at the small response received. Nearly one half of the States have not a representative, nor the comforter of the Almighty Dollar.

Must the name of Thomas Paine be forgotten, while the churches grow. The Catholic Church have only to call on Paddy and get all the money they need. Paddy every year gives liberally to his religion, in addition to supporting a large family.

If we had a few men of the Paddy type, who would go down in their pockets once in a century, the Paine meeting would be a grand success, such a demonstration as would convince Teddy that the "Atheist" had a few friends in this country.

It all depends on the Almighty Dollar, be it green or yellow. Send your name at once to Dr. Foote.

They are celebrating the 400th anniversary of the birth of John Calvin in this city; also the anniversary of St. James Church, founded by Bishop White in 1809. It was he who wrote against Thomas Paine and Girard College.

Are the Blade readers asleep? Wake up and do something that your children will be proud of. Do this in memory of Bro. Chas. C. Moore, who will be with us in spirit.

I have just received a letter from a Western lady, who has decided to dispense with her spring hat; also a man who is raising a calf; both will devote the price to aid the Paine Celebration. If each Paine admirer would only give a day's wages the success of the undertaking would be assured, and you will receive the pamphlet of the Paine's Day proceedings, nicely illustrated with the latest views, as a souvenir; also a facsimile copy of a letter written by Paine to Gen. Green, which sold in Philadelphia for \$70.00. Is not this worth something?

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